

Pioneering Stewardship: New Challenges for CRM

by David Lowenthal

It is a privilege to join in celebrating *CRM: The Journal of Heritage Stewardship's* inaugural issue. Along with countless practitioners and teachers, I owe the National Park Service a quarter century debt. Sparing time and thought from toils on the coalface of public history, hundreds of dedicated specialists have furnished *CRM* with progress reports on everything from archival repositories to archeological sites, time capsules to treasure-hunting, disabled access to disaster strategies for heritage sites.

Twenty-five years have ripened heritage itself into history. Maturity provides the rationale for broadening *CRM's* remit still further. In the new journal the nitty-gritty specifics of resource management will appear side by side with more extended reflections on heritage in general—its meaning and purpose, growth and evolution, supporters and detractors, perils and promises. Such a forum is sorely needed. Aside from a handful of periodicals—*The Public Historian*, *The International Journal of Heritage Studies*, *The International Journal of Cultural Property* (now, alas, temporarily suspended)—no accessible forum for inquiry and debate encompasses heritage in its rich and multifaceted entirety. As a result, the public at large as well as professional heritage practitioners are apt to lose sight of the forest for the trees.

Heritage is a consummately crisis-driven pursuit. We are swamped by manifold urgent issues, overwhelmed by imminent threats to fabric or integrity, driven by successive emergencies. Hence we seldom find occasion to meditate on the passions and presumptions, the credos and the crochets that underpin the whole enterprise, making heritage a vital living force. *CRM's* editorial board now recognizes that such contemplation is not just a marginal frill; it is a cardinal need.

That the National Park Service is the prime vehicle for reflections on heritage might at first glance seem highly unlikely to those who only see the agency as a manager of campsites and guardian of flora and fauna. Who would conceive of this “Smokey Bear” image as a sounding-board for scholarly stewardship? Yet in truth the National Park Service vies with the National Archives, the Smithsonian Institution, and the Library of Congress as the national agency most concerned with—and best informed about—heritage. How has this come to be? Because the American National Park System was born, almost uniquely in the world, of a conservation crusade. Haunted by fears engendered by the despoliation of

nature, the closing of the frontier, and the end of free land, a small coterie of devotees persuaded Congress to set aside extensive tracts from mounting pressures of commercial exploitation. The parks were designated as public sanctuaries, intended to inspire, instruct, and refresh present and future generations. Initially limited to realms of scenic splendor and pristine wilderness—such as Yellowstone and Yosemite—the National Park System later expanded to include sites valued for the tales of human history there enacted, terrains of triumph and tragedy dating from ancient prehistory to the near present—Mesa Verde to Rosie the Riveter WWII Home Front. Revolutionary and Civil War battlefields today coexist with locales consecrated to the suffragette movement, to civil rights, even, as is most fitting, to pioneers of American conservation, at California's Muir Woods National Monument and Vermont's Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park.

As the parks' remit expanded, so did the experience and expertise of those who staffed them. Responsibility for hundreds of sites in every corner of the country aroused keen awareness of their instructive potential. What Americans admire in their parks and historic monuments increasingly mirrors their resource management concerns at home. Just as the heritage community today embraces all Americans, park visitors or not, so do the management and stewardship principles initiated in parks bid fair to become exemplary guides for the well-being of all America. Ecological health, aesthetic integrity, wise use, and equitable stewardship are no longer principles exclusively bounded within park precincts. They begin to apply, for all Americans, to all America.

Heritage attachments, individual and collective alike, have grown phenomenally over the past quarter of a century. In this surge, four particular trends feature prominently in current practice and in the pages of *CRM*: merging heritage's multiple realms and disciplines, fructifying professional expertise with amateur enthusiasm, balancing resource preservation with creative innovation, transforming heritage stewardship from a sporadic operation detached from ongoing life into a pervasive social commitment. Each of these trends holds promises and engenders problems that merit comment.

Merging Disciplinary Expertise

Time was when the Nation's heritage mainly connoted great architectural monuments and renowned works of art. These were the exclusive domain of historians and conservators, whose duties were to verify authenticity and provenance, and to protect and curate materials and relics. Experts in each field tended to work in isolation: buildings and paintings and grave goods, tapestry and topiary and illuminated texts were studied and conserved with little interchange of ideas or skills from one realm to any other. Each treasure was a distinct thing apart, as decontextualized as an item in a cabinet of curiosities.

No longer is heritage thus atomized and segregated. That its subject matter has immeasurably expanded is common knowledge. Less widely known, yet no less important, is the growing convergence of heritage connoisseurship and management. Archeologists, archivists, art and architectural historians work in tandem with one another, collaborating as well with biologists, geneticists, philologists, genealogists, folklorists, and myriad others. Practitioners in every facet of our natural and cultural legacy are coming to realize how intricately heritage issues interlink. Issues of provenance, authenticity, protection, interpretation, display, commodification, legal title, restitution, repatriation, pillaging, illicit trade—to list but a few matters of moment—are hardly ever tidily circumscribed within any single sphere; instead they require conjoined insights. To cite one famed instance, understanding the Elgin Marbles demands knowledge of classical sculpture and architecture, Ottoman law, Greek and British history, 18th- and 19th-century Hellenism, 19th- and 20th-century connoisseurship and aesthetic taste, the physics and chemistry of marble and its corrosion and decay, the career of Melina Mercouri, and the iconic political role of the British Museum.

Practitioners in every facet of our natural and cultural legacy are coming to realize how intricately heritage issues interlink. Issues of provenance, authenticity, protection, interpretation, display, commodification, legal title, restitution, repatriation, pillaging, illicit trade—to list but a few matters of moment—are hardly ever tidily circumscribed within any single sphere; instead they require conjoined insights.

The challenge here is how to surmount entrenched specialization, how to overcome academic apartheid. Heritage specialists need to be equipped with the combined insights of science, art, and history. Resource managers need to be made aware that the particular gems of nature and culture in their care are part and parcel of the interlinked spectrum of our entire global legacy. Every heritage professional should ideally be a polymath.

Fructifying Professional Commitment with Public Commitment

Well into the 1970s mainstream American heritage was chosen by, and pretty much limited to, a small elite that was overwhelmingly white, professional, affluent, and genteel. That elite's tastes reflected a patrician and patriotic nostalgia for icons of WASP America—colonial antiques, Greek- and Gothic-Revival architecture, sites and relics and memorials connected with the Founding Fathers and saviors of the Republic, with Manifest Destiny, and with milestones of progress. This was a heritage apotheosized at Independence Hall and the Washington Monument, Mount Vernon and Monticello, Rockefeller's Williamsburg and Ford's Dearborn.

Recent decades have seen mainstream American heritage enlarged and transformed almost beyond recognition by popular enthusiasm and populist assimilation. Proletarian voices previously unheard now out-shout the cognoscenti. Women, African Americans, Native Americans, and dozens of minorities today register—and what's more, reify—their own distinctive heritage preferences. Local and ethnic roots, craft lore and skills, folkways of food and dress, music and dance, sports and the media, collectibles of all aspects of popular culture have become integral to cultural resource stewardship. Indeed, once-despised humble origins lend such heritage special cachet.

Meanwhile, heritage now adjudged elitist is not erased but radically reinterpreted. The customary fables of the victors are supplanted by tales told by the victims. From historical markers to presidential homesteads and Civil War sites, revision is everywhere rife. To be sure, professional disdain for lay involvement—unenlightened, unskilled, avaricious, self-centered, dilettante—still persists. But populist preferences are now a major force in every aspect of heritage from museum acquisition and display to tourism.

Enhanced inclusiveness has two prime virtues: it brings to light valued heritage domains up to now unremarked or dismissed by professionals, and it affirms and sponsors heritage management as a public good. Indeed, widespread popular support is essential to sustain heritage stewardship over the long term.

The challenge here is to enable heritage expertise to serve this widely diversified new clientele. To do so calls for incorporating arts of communication and skills of give-and-take into heritage education. Every heritage professional should be trained to articulate technical issues in lay terms. Their most crucial task is to inform and alert officials, watchdogs, and voters—the ultimately decisive amateurs. At the same time, the public needs to be continually reminded that decision-making entails responsibility for making reasoned choices.

Balancing Preservation with Creation

Cultural resource management in previous generations was largely devoted to saving things—safeguarding for as long as possible legacies bequeathed to us from the past. But the emphasis on preservation tended to museumize and hence to ossify these precious relics. As a consequence, heritage was a realm set apart. Unlike the messy ongoing present, the cherished past was immortal, unchanging, congealed in amber, essentially lifeless.

Heritage today has developed into a far more vibrant and dynamic realm. We now feel that worthwhile legacies need to remain in continual flux. They require not only periodic renewal but selective replacement by new creations. Indeed, evolution is inescapable: all remnants and traces of the past suffer attrition from ongoing decay and erosion, annihilation by episodic accident

and cataclysm. Aging and death are the universal lot. And even while items of heritage physically endure, the passage of time implacably alienates us from what they signified for their makers and first possessors. In the end, most survivals cease to speak to us in any meaningful way, becoming only pale academic echoes of the messages they once conveyed. Of the adornments, the memorabilia, even the monuments of the past but a tiny fraction endure, and of those that do fewer still are esteemed as heritage.

Yet these losses are offset by manifold ongoing gains. Surviving heritage ever accretes new substances and accrues new meanings, its look and relevance altering for each successive inheritor. And fresh treasures expand our heritage trove in four distinct ways. First, discoveries ceaselessly surface from newly excavated or re-explored depths of land and sea. Second, relics and memories previously disregarded take on heritage value. Third, we acquire as heritage the residues and bygones of the immediate past. And fourth, we add our own creations to the heritage stock. Lamentable as heritage losses often seem, they are in the long run more than compensated by heritage gains.

We sustain organic touch with heritage not by striving to preserve its every vestige forever, but by accepting attrition and mortality as inevitable, and by pridefully adding our own creations to ancestral bequests. To care well for what we inherit we must form the habit of admiring our own works too—and, of necessity, making them worthy of admiration. Innovation is not the opposite of conservation but its indispensable adjunct.

The challenge here is to temper the clamorous demands of the immediate present with a compelling rationale for the claims of both past and future. Presentist bias is ingrained in today's social and political institutions. Individuals are too impotent, corporations too profit-bent, governments too dependent on instant pay-offs to care for cultural resources beyond the next election, let alone beyond our own lifetimes.

Stewardship is an ideal much preached but little practiced. Yet in reality stewardship not only benefits the future, it also enhances present worth: in caring for the well-being of our heirs and successors, we enrich the meaning of our own lives and strengthen our communal attachments. But effectual stewardship requires collaborative effort sustained over many generations.

Making Stewardship Integral to Everyday Life

Well aware that free enterprise and private property rights were American articles of faith, past conservation leaders habitually abstained from promoting programs of general land reform; they realized these would be unworkable. Instead they focused on perfecting the precious jewels they could control by government possession—Federal and State forest reserves, parks, and

wilderness areas. Here they sought, often with enviable success, to create exemplary sites of ecological, recreational, and scenic inspiration. However, these sites' intended exemplary function was long a total failure. Rather than becoming models for reforming the way land in general was managed, they were seen by the visiting public as uniquely sacred places utterly set apart from the everyday landscape.

Americans thus grew accustomed to think that only these special set-aside locales were worth conserving, and the rest of the country undeserving of attention save for narrow profit. So we ended up with a handful of superbly managed sites to view on holiday or admire from afar, and a run-of-the-mill everyday landscape devoid of control or care. This dichotomy entrenched the disastrous fallacy that only the unusual warranted saving; what was ordinary was worthless. It was socially as well as environmentally divisive, setting the rich against the rest, policed and gated elysiums against the unkempt disarray of everywhere else.

More recently, reserved public lands have helped inspire stewardship far beyond park boundaries. The outstanding gems of our country's natural, cultural, and spiritual resources now begin to exemplify, rather than to be set apart from, the everyday terrain of our ordinary places of work and play, travel and repose. We are now beginning to realize that resource stewardship of nature and culture and of both together cannot be only an occasional, one-off activity; it must be embedded in everyday behavior towards land, goods, the places we live in as well as those we visit and dream about. Not heritage professionals alone but all of us need and deserve a fulfilling environment enriched by past memories and future hopes.

The challenge here is to persuade individualistic Americans, more devoted than any other people to the total sanctity of private property, that a truly collaborative community is the seed-bed of stewardship that can enhance cultural resources for us all. Instilling stewardship into the fabric of daily life and thought is, in my view, our most imperative task today.

Conclusion: Global Perspectives

Finally, *CRM's* bid to address linkages between heritage issues in the United States and those abroad is most welcome. Fully as consequential as the four trends discussed above is the growing globalization of heritage thinking, heritage skills, and the heritage market. The trend toward global fusion deserves special note because it flies in the face of the compartmentalized fashion in which heritage has traditionally been understood, valued, and used.

Heritage is famously personal, local, and national; each individual and group touts its own legacy, disdains that of others, and keeps outsiders—potential

claimants or interlopers or destroyers—at arm’s length. We consider *our* heritage uniquely our own, different from and implicitly better than anyone else’s. Possessiveness is inherent in heritage attachment. Hence claimants are bound to conflict, and controversy is exacerbated by feuds over the ownership and interpretation of contested heritage.

Today awareness is rising that much of the heritage we cherish is cherished in common. Moreover, its proper appraisal and interpretation—not to mention the nuts-and-bolts essentials of its management—require global cooperation. More and more we pool stewardship, expertise, and resources. Not only the fundamental elements of the world’s natural heritage—woods and waters, soils and biotic systems—but the essential building-blocks of its cultural legacy—languages and lexicons, libraries and archives, museums and historic sites—are more and more seen as the entire planet’s shared heritage.

The great challenge here is to overcome dog-in-the-manger chauvinism. Can the selfishness and jealousy innate to heritage passions be tamed or moderated in a mutual concern for a collaborative global commons? I trust that this journal will address how humanity can in concert elevate heritage from spoils of war into shared symbols of cosmopolitan diversity. For we owe our heritage, along with our biological and cultural ancestries, to a hybrid amalgam: the creative commingling of countless dreams and deeds.

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Por la encendida calle antillana:
 Africanisms and Puerto Rican Architecture¹

by Arleen Pabón

*Por la encendida calle antillana
 Va Tembandumba de la Quimbamba.
 Flor de Tortola, rosa de Uganda,
 Por ti crepitan bombas y bámbulas;
 Por ti en calendas desenfrenadas
 Quema la Antilla su sangre ñáñiga.
 Haití te ofrece sus calabazas;
 Fogoses rones te da Jamaica;
 Cuba te dice: dale mulata;
 Y Puerto Rico melao, melamba;*

Walking down the Antillean street
 Goes Tembandumba from Quimbamba.²
 Flower from Tortola, rose from Uganda,
 Dances such as *bombas* and *bámbulas*
 Crackle in your honor;
 For you in uncontrolled *calendas*
 The Antilles burn her *ñáñiga* blood.
 Haiti offers you her pumpkins;
 Jamaica gives you her rums;
 Cuba directs you: Go on, *mulata!*
 And Puerto Rico: *melao, melamba!*
 (Translation by author.)

When Puerto Rican poet Luis Palés Matos wrote these well-known lines of his poem “Majestad Negra” (Black Majesty), he was trying to capture Tembandumba’s impact as she walked down an Antillean street.³ Thanks to his imagery, we can picture the effect of her provocative progress on the population. The alluring street has no name. The poem is about all streets, a metaphor for all Caribbean walks of life illuminated by African presence.

“Majestad Negra,” like this paper, deals with intangibles. One of the key components of Puerto Rican culture is its African heritage, particularly in architecture. But, just as Tembandumba lives only in a poem, evidence of African impact on the island’s architecture is barely tangible, dimly surfacing only when we interpret some rapidly disappearing ruins or a few old photographs.

This paper is about things that are no more. It deals with absence and tries to dislodge two cherished Western beliefs. First, (to use Nikolaus Pevsner's grand metaphor) only cathedrals and not bicycle sheds deserve academic scrutiny. Second, cultural significance by historic preservation standards is only embodied in physically identifiable artifacts.

Many years ago, when I first tried to understand why historic preservation (or architectural history for that matter) seldom dealt with aspects of *herstory* (as opposed to *history*), I realized that many academics and preservation practitioners had a narrow vision. Take for example the historical development of Caribbean domestic architecture. Seldom is the topic academically explored; seldom, if ever, is it analyzed as a significant component of the region's cultural heritage. While a few Caribbean dwellings, most always examples of the big house, are presented as transplanted examples of grand European architecture, native and African influences are treated in a perfunctory manner, if at all. Simply put, the issue of architectural diversity has not been analyzed in a holistic fashion.

As a result, society fails to understand how the slave hut was able to breed as many, if not more, important domestic ideas as the big house. More significantly, we fail to consider the role that subordinate groups, such as women and, in this case, Puerto Ricans of African descent, played in the creation of the island's architectural heritage. African influence on Puerto Rican architecture is a non-subject in part because the following questions have not been addressed: Can an enslaved group contribute to a culture's architectural development? If this is possible, are huts and similarly unassuming structures culturally significant? How are physically absent architectural artifacts to be analyzed? Most importantly, is such analysis relevant in historic preservation?

For decades, only silence answered these questions. Unfortunately, a void in knowledge is construed as nonparticipation. The time has come to follow Tembandumba's lead and walk down the Antillean "street" of architectural knowledge, shedding light upon Africanisms present in Puerto Rican architecture.⁴

The Native Hut

By all accounts, Caribbean architecture mesmerized Spaniards when they first encountered it. They were surprised by the apparent fragility of the vernacular house, both in terms of form and materials. The climate and nomadic character of the natives dictated informal arrangements of spaces, as well as the use of natural materials.⁵ It quickly became obvious that Columbus's enthusiastic description of Puerto Rican houses as "very good" (*muy buenas*) and able to "hold their place in Valencia" was not accurate.⁶ The native hut, known throughout the Caribbean as the *bohío*, was a fairly simple arrangement of reeds, grass, bark, and foliage.⁷

FIGURE 1

In the background, under the balcony of the big house Hacienda Buenavista, Ponce, Puerto Rico, is the barracón once inhabited by slaves. Hacienda Buenavista is presently owned by the Puerto Rico Conservation Trust. (Courtesy of the author.)



Caribbean natives did not construct following Valencian or European architectural ideals; Columbus's lavish interpretation was atypical in the bevy of descriptions generated with time. There were no European-style aesthetic arrangements in the Caribbean native house. Ironically, the native's most common building was very similar to the Vitruvian hut: a makeshift affair, open to nature.⁸

When Europeans first came into contact with the North American continent, pristine spaces exhibited the lightness of the natives' touch. The absence of architectural bravado (a characteristic of European experience) and traditional associational ties created the illusion that the continent was architecturally mute. European architecture speaks diverse languages that, in turn, allow for

multiple interpretations. Since unpretentious structures like the *bohío* are *prima fasciae* devoid of the traditional character that reflects complex architectural language, many leading historians (then and now) believe that such structures lack relevance and significance. While it might not qualify for inclusion in Europe's architectural pantheon, the *bohío* became the basis for the island's most common architectural artifact, the Puerto Rican house.

There exists a well known, deep and complex interaction between building and culture. This is the case with all cultures, even "prehistoric" ones. More than a third of the world's population lives in structures made of mud, and a sizable number still lives in tents.⁹ Are we to ignore these expressions or judge them by European standards?

In order to correctly evaluate the architectural significance of nontraditional architectural artifacts, we must abandon traditional Western models of interpretation. We need not follow Columbus's route of exaggeration. Rather, we should analyze how architecture expresses social and experiential diversity. It would be a mistake to consider Puerto Rico's humble abodes, whether erected by the indigenous Taíno or immigrant Africans, to be mere instinctual solutions to the problem of survival. It is paradoxical that even the humblest of these artifacts, in trying to defy dangers implicit in living, is totemic of meaningful existence.

Certainly, some viewed the lack of architectural trappings as cultural inferiority, but not all. During the 18th century, Puerto Ricans¹⁰ were described as "An abstraction of all ideas of progress and social obligations...*Ibaros* [*sic*] without truly understanding their negation of material things are the world's greatest philosophers, recognizing no need for artificial things."¹¹ Their abodes were then a reflection of a peculiar cultural response to both life and the pursuit of an existence. Labels such as "prehistoric" are secondary in this type of interpretative analysis. The drama of living is common to all humans, whether born millennia ago or centuries from now. The primary stage for this drama, whether located in the Caribbean or the Antipodes, is the artifact we call a house.

The African Experience

When slavery began in Puerto Rico in the 17th century, many slaves lived in *barracones*, where they experienced a total and degrading lack of privacy.¹² (Figure 1) Later, in the 19th century when sugar cane production was established in Puerto Rico, some slaves were allowed to have their own huts. In spite of its humble ethos, this hut, a condensation of native and African ideas, is iconic of a momentous cultural transformation. The hut provided something the *barracones* did not: a place where personal roots could be planted.

It is documented that Caribbean islanders followed—and still do—specific rites as they built their houses.¹³ From Guadeloupe's ceremony marking the cutting

FIGURE 2

These twin Puerto Rican bohios are closely related to the native type. At a later date, wooden planks were used in the construction of the exterior walls. This change in materials was one of many transformations of the architectural type. (Unknown source, circa 1930-1940.)



down of the master post of the hut;¹⁴ to the Puerto Rican phrase, *plantar jolcones*, which literally translates into “planting” the wooden structural posts; to Cuban religious ceremonies that took place at the construction site, this rite of passage was important. There was dignity associated with possession of a hut, even the simplest one, for it represented many hopes and dreams. It is paradoxical that so much feeling could go into such an architecturally basic form.

The native *bohío* had much in common with many African house types, enshrined in the memories of those who experienced the African diaspora. However, significant variations on the local prototype can be detected. Africanisms found their way into the native architectural experience partly because slaves were in charge of constructing their abodes.¹⁵ As a result, past experiences and modes of construction were replicated in the new environment. After all, not only were there similarities in terms of climate, as Diego de Torres Vargas pointed out as early as 1647, but also in construction materials.¹⁶ This approach should not cause surprise, for Europeans, just like Africans, followed the exact same pattern: architectural styling and construction techniques closely mimicked those found in their native land, in spite of climatic differences.

Most archeological findings corroborate historical descriptions of the Amerindian huts: a round or oval floor plan covered with a thatched roof and open-work wooden walls.¹⁷ Consensus is not, however, as widespread regarding the idea that Europeans introduced the square or oblong hut to the island.¹⁸ (Figures 2 and 3) We do know that the vernacular hut morphology experienced a transformation and that oblong (at times square) floor plans came to be preferred. Since the change was not the result of different construction materials or climatic conditions, the new preference is probably

FIGURE 3

Changes in the original Puerto Rican bohío type are evident here. A second unit next to the original one was a common solution to the needs of a growing family. (Unknown source, 1916.)



related to diverse experiences: from new construction techniques to religious and cultural ideas imported not from Europe but from Africa. The ideas did not reflect European construction techniques or native architectural expressions. Comparisons can be made with African building traditions, but more research and interpretative activities are needed in order to correlate the *bohío*'s development with architectural traditions present in African countries such as modern-day Nigeria, Congo, and Senegal.¹⁹

African experience also transformed the minimalist approach that characterized the native *bohío*. Most historical descriptions make a point of emphasizing its “open character,” evidenced in most contemporary images. These houses, termed *bohíos* from the very early stages of the Spanish conquest, were described some decades later in the following manner: “Four tree trunks placed into the soil with smaller ones placed across, covered by dried *yaguas*, [raised] two to three feet from the ground to keep the humidity out and having a small staircase to enter the house.” The description further mentions that no nails or other European fasteners were used and that the hut was completely open with only the sleeping area barely protected from the “excessive night air” (*fresco excesivo*). It was here the inhabitants slept, grouped together “like savages.” There was no furniture, no table, no bed or crib, only *hamacas* made with “Mayagüez bark” (at a cost of two *reales*). The *ménage* was composed of instruments “provided by Nature,” such as palm leaves, which were folded and sewn to make dining plates, wash basins, baskets used as commodes, and even funeral caskets for children.²⁰

While in the United States, the slave cabin “recapitulated frontier architecture,” in Puerto Rico, African descendants altered the native typology and made possible a new organization, both spatial and contextual.²¹ As mentioned before, instead of the round floor plan common to the natives, the square or rectangle

was preferred. In addition, the makeshift, nomadic, native ethos was also transformed: as time went on, the *bohío* acquired more substance both in terms of materials and structural components. The most interesting transformation was a switch to a more introverted character. The transformed hut, in most cases, had no windows and only a small door to the interior. (Figure 4)

This lack of establishing direct connections with the exterior was a deviation from the native arrangement. Opening interiors to the outdoors is common in a tropical milieu, characterized by its hot, humid weather. Enclosure is probably a most relevant Africanism. Walls define boundaries: within them you have status, personal definition. If you were a slave, outside of the seemingly flimsy boundaries established by the walls of your *bohío* you had nothing and were considered nothing. The more openings present in a hut, the more transparency and lack of privacy experienced within the interior. For the enslaved population (and you were enslaved whether you were a slave, a freed slave, or an *arrimao*) the bright outdoor space was not their space but a cruel stage, a vivid reminder of the unfortunate situation that they experienced.²² A dark, enclosed interior created a sense of intimacy that protected, to paraphrase Gaston Bachelard, the user's immense intimacy from prying eyes and the real world.²³ Completely enclosed spaces provide respite from the heat as well.

It is recorded that all over the Caribbean, in the few cases where windows do appear, blind shutters closed them, per African tradition, in marked contrast to fancy, more transparent European shutters.²⁴ When inside the *bohío*, you wanted to shut out the exterior, not to bring it in. This characteristic became an intrinsic part of the traditional Puerto Rican house. To this day, most windows, when shut, allow no light to come in.

FIGURE 4
The image depicts an evolved Puerto Rican *bohío*. The use of wooden planks and metal (zinc) is characteristic of late 19th and early 20th century examples. The type, which incorporates Africanisms, is the transitional link between the native *bohío* and the vernacular Puerto Rican house. (Unknown source, circa 1930-1940.)



FIGURE 5
 Another example of an evolved bohío, using wooden planks obtained from the palm tree (tabla de costa or tabla de palma). Notice the ramp-like artifact seen at the right of the image. (Unknown source, circa 1930-1940.)



As a result of this desire for privacy, the entry point—the place where the conversion between public and private, profane and sacred, took place—was limited to one very small opening. Given that the entrance was considered a “weak” point in the desire for privacy and interior autonomy from the exterior, the access, when the floor was higher than the ground, was a small, roughly conceived wooden ramp or staircase. (Figure 5) It was common for the interior space to serve as a living-cum-sleeping place (such generic spaces were called *piezas* or *aposentos* by my grandmother) that either had a dirt floor or a wooden platform on stilts (*zocos*). Most lived *al fresco* most of the day, working on their labors. The desire to “forget” the reality of their lives could only be exercised at night, when their time was their own. At night they preferred a completely enclosed area in order to reinforce a sense of isolation from the “cruel stage.”

The floor had a unique symbolism and, in keeping with its significance, had its own special name, *soberao*, a word of unknown origin.²⁵ The *soberao* is not just a floor but evidence of a dwelling locus. For a woman her *soberao* proved not only that she had a house but also that she was the lady of that house.²⁶

In the United States, slaves at times insisted on a particular type of floor finish as an act of appropriation. Susan Snow, a former slave raised on a plantation in Jasper County, Mississippi, reported that most of the slave cabins had wooden floors, except the one that was assigned to her African-born mother: “My ma never would have no board floor like the rest of ‘em, on ‘count she was a

FIGURE 6

The older bohío structure (at left) is smaller and has a dirt-packed floor. The newer structure is larger and raised on stilts (zocos). No windows are present in either of the bohíos. (Unknown source, circa 1930-1940.)



FIGURE 7

This structure was described as a bohío made of wood and paja during the 1940s. It shows how the bohío morphology evolved with family needs. The structure with the porch can be considered a direct descendant of the bohío and precedent for the typical Puerto Rican vernacular house. (Unknown source, circa 1940s.)



African—only dirt.” By rejecting an apparent material “improvement,” this woman recreated in her house an aspect of African domestic life with which she was more comfortable.²⁷

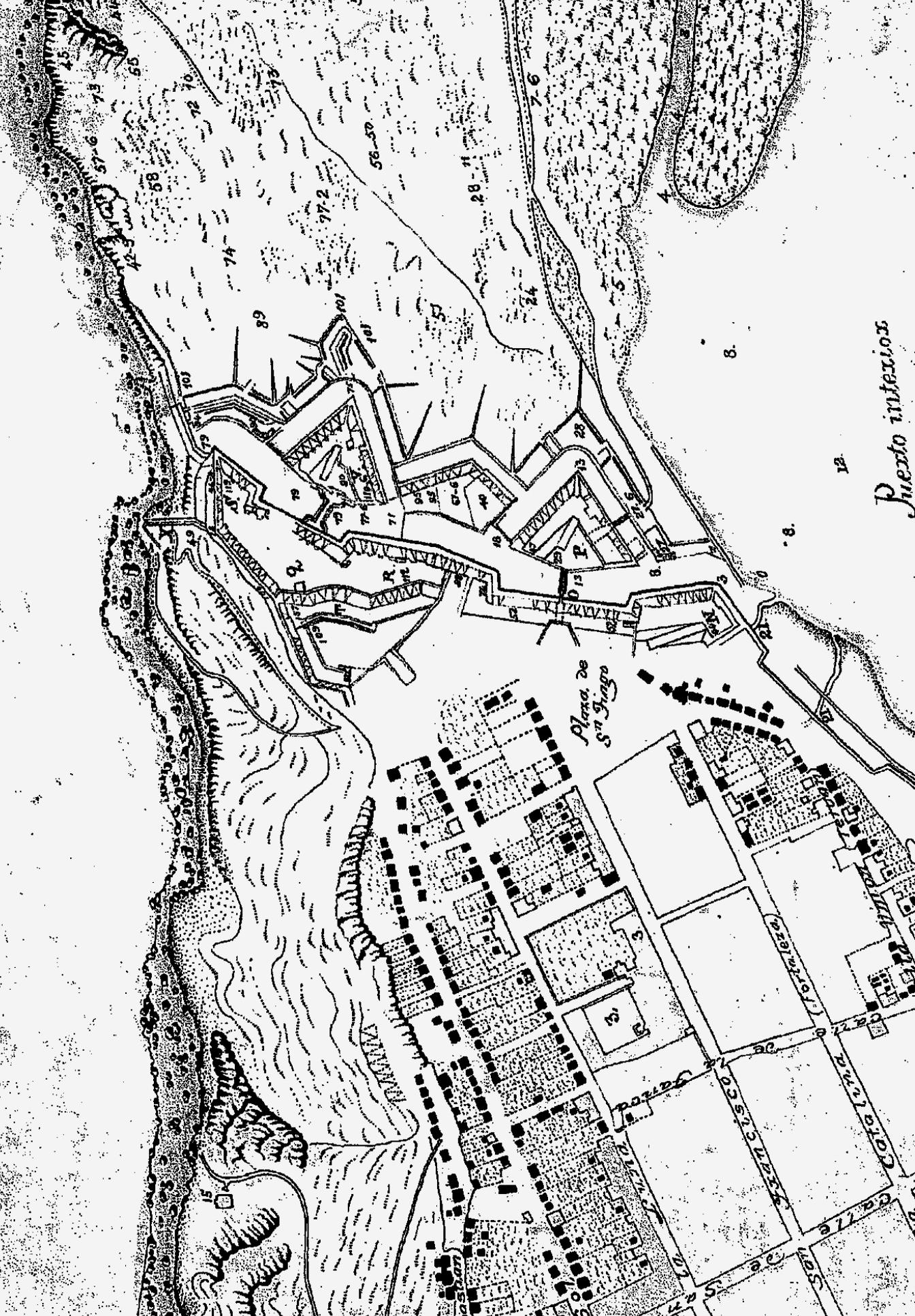
The feel and texture of the dirt against bare feet, the smell of packed earth, and the darkness enveloping these sensations were probably a reminder of the long-gone African past. In Puerto Rico, the dirt floor slowly evolved into the raised floor surface, a solution aimed at providing protection against tropical rain and the ever-constant humidity. However, there is evidence that dirt floors were used well into the 20th century.(Figure 6)

A *bohío* was more than just a shelter; it was a womb-like setting that provided comfort by means of privacy. The *bohío* experimented with minimalist architectural ideas and its unique personality was the result of importing the African architectural experience into the domain of the native house.²⁸ At a later stage, other Africanisms were introduced, such as the emphasis on the long axis and special decorations on the main facade. When these traditions fused with other ideas (such as the Anglo-American grille), the unique Puerto Rican house came to be. (Figure 7) Most examples of the hut type are long gone but their architectural influence is still with us in every solidly closed window and in every street used as a *batey* (patio) by children and grownups alike.

On the island, cooking was considered a communal affair and, once again, Africanisms transformed the native experience: the Taíno *batey* became a common area shared by the *bohíos* that help organize it. Contrary to European plaza standards, this iconic space did not follow any particular geometric layout. It was an informal place to work, chat, cook, play, and, on occasions, dance. It is interesting to note that balconies, the paradigmatic European architectural domestic interior/exterior artifact, are not present in the African-Puerto Rican hut. On the island, Europeans used balconies as visual instruments of order and power. In the countryside they acted as a platform from where the activities of the farm (*hacienda*) could be inspected. In the city they helped maintain the *purdah* system, being the only exterior place a woman could venture on her own without male escort. In both cases, they represented something foreign, seldom experienced by the group under study: a place to spend time at ease. The communal *batey* was the equivalent of the European balcony: it acted both as architectural signifier and signified.

The lack of interest in formal arrangement evidenced in the *batey* is parallel to the way the group related to the city. Even in the tightly restricted San Juan urban area, the free African-Puerto Rican population chose to express themselves in a different manner. It is interesting to note that the *barrio* where most lived was distinguished by its own name.²⁹ In a historic plan of the area, we discover that the individual houses do not follow the rigid grid layout that characterizes the rest of the urban enclave.³⁰ (Figure 8)

As the orthogonal arrangement can still be seen today, the domestic units deconstruct the grid. In fact, some houses in the area still have small front gardens, something unheard of in the rest of the city.³¹ This is the only preserved physical evidence we have of an urban Africanism on the island, an example of self-expression by a subordinate class. It is indeed curious how, even in the structured and standardized European grid milieu, the group's identity was preserved.



Puerto interior

Plaza de San Diego

Calle de San Diego

Calle de San Juan

Calle de San Pedro

Calle de San Pablo

Calle de San Mateo

Calle de San Marcos

Calle de San Basilio

Calle de San Valero

Calle de San Prudencio

Calle de San Eusebio

Calle de San Agapito

Calle de San Amador

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On Things Unseen

Not all things are visible like small front gardens or old photographs of *bohíos*. There are things unseen regarding the African impact upon Puerto Rican architecture, things for which we lack physical evidence. Contemporary society is said to be guided by phonocentrism, described as a partiality or a favoring of physicality. As a result, physicality—interpreted, on many occasions, as that which is more common—represents truth and reality. The interpretation that something stands for “reality” just because it is more common, makes possible the construction of many different types of binaries: being/not being, presence/absence, male/female, white/black, among others. As Jacques Derrida and others have explained, such binary oppositions favor the “groundly” term or the construction that supposedly articulates the fundamentals.³² In this manner, distorted conclusions may be reached.

FIGURE 8

This section of the Plano de la Plaza de San Juan de Puerto Rico y sus ymmediaciones [sic]...depicts the area within the old San Juan urban core where African descendants settled. The original plan is dated 1771 and was copied in 1880. (National Archives and Records Administration, RG 71.)

Unfortunately, architectural phonocentrism affects historic preservation methodologies. We tend to ascribe cultural significance to artifacts that we can see or, at the most intangible, to places directly related to events we define as significant or to sites that we believe physically represent historic events. If we do some soul searching, we realize that we are really in the business of preserving tangibles. Yet tangibles are a trap that cause us to believe that only “real things” (as in physical) matter. This is particularly the case regarding architecture.

On occasion, I define architecture to my students using Martin Heidegger’s dwelling concept that, naturally, requires presence. It seems to follow that if architecture requires presence, so do historic preservation activities.³³ Is this true? Is cultural significance exclusively tied to the presence of an object? Most of the time, our answer to this last question is yes. That is one of the reasons why many Underground Railroad resources do not qualify as historic resources: we do not have a string of architectural or archeological “things” we can see that are related to them. Curiously, because of our architectural phonocentrism, even when we see, we fail to understand.

Ruins of *barracones* have a paradigmatic presence in many Puerto Rican *haciendas*. (Figure 9) While the various names attributed to these structures should alert us, most specialists miss the point regarding the cultural significance of these structures. These places are more than just ruins of storage areas because, in many cases, slaves also used them as dwelling places. The absence of traditional domestic architectural accoutrements clouds our understanding. Interpreted solely as storage areas, they are perceived as architectural symbols of commercial ventures, as examples of specific construction techniques...as everything except the homes of slaves. More importantly, understood as mere storage areas and not as slaves’ dwellings, no research activities are undertaken on their other possible histories. As a result, no urgent need arises to preserve the half dozen that still remain on the island.

FIGURE 9

Puerto Rican barracones were originally made of the same materials as the bohío. As time went on, metal sheets were used to reinforce the durability of the exterior walls. (Unknown source, circa 1930-1940.)



FIGURE 10

The cotton beneficiando at Hacienda La Esmeralda, Santa Isabel, Puerto Rico, sheltered the cotton gin. Of special interest is its elegant temple front facade and corner pilasters. (Courtesy of the author.)



FIGURE 11

The fields in the Manatí area of Puerto Rico were worked by slave labor in cultivating sugar. (Courtesy of the author.)





FIGURE 12
Hacienda La Esperanza, Manatí, Puerto Rico, in spite of its present ruinous state, was one of the most important sugar mills on the island worked by slave labor. The property is owned by the Puerto Rico Conservation Trust. (Courtesy of the author.)

All languages, including architecture, are symbols of a mental experience that consists both of sensory and mental perceptions. Architecture is more than a physical artifact and it follows that its “reality” is constructed of more than just stones and bricks or design ideas. There exist supplemental components, like the intangible “baggage” implicit in cultural diversity to mention just one. As preservationists working with the past for the future we have a cultural exigency: we must question traditional interpretations, dislodge assumed certitudes, and deconstruct undivided points of view. How are we to do this? Let us accept Derrida’s recommendation and privilege feelings over physicality.

Conclusion

Buildings are a necessity of the metaphysics of presence. Hence their historical significance: they are physically identifiable. Cultural heritage, however, is formed not only of thoughts expressed physically but also of emotions. Furthermore, absent architectural artifacts might still be audible precisely because of their silence. Regarding Africanisms and Puerto Rican architecture, I believe in privileging absence over presence.

Some structures are more than just *barracones* sitting in the meadows.³⁴ (Figure 10) Some empty fields are more than just old and now abandoned agricultural areas. These places need to be interpreted in a manner similar to historic battlefields. We preserve battlefields because, for a relatively short interval, something important happened there. Ruins and many abandoned

fields are landmarks in the same manner as battlefields. (Figures 11 and 12.) In these places—in every sugar, coffee, or cotton row—a battle was fought every hour of every day, every week, every year, for several centuries. The battle was for things sacred: individual dignity and freedom. These sites, including the few known resting places of the enslaved population, are truly battlefields of honor, where blood and sweat were spent. (Figure 13) Because of this, they are a significant component of Puerto Rican and Caribbean cultural memory.



FIGURE 13
Unrecognized by most people, this is the site of the slave cemetery at Hacienda La Esperanza, Manatí, Puerto Rico. (Courtesy of the author.)

Thanks to poetry, Tembandumba's personality and charm are preserved for posterity. The sites and architectural memories that evidence Africanisms present in Puerto Rican architecture are not. We need to preserve them or else risk forgetting one of Puerto Rican culture's most fascinating and elusive histories.

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Notes

1. This essay is based on a paper presented at the National Park Service's "Places of Cultural Memory: African Reflections on the American Landscape" conference convened in Atlanta, Georgia, in May 2001. The author wishes to thank Professors Rafael A. Crespo and Andrew Chin, Antoinette J. Lee, Brian D. Joyner, and Frederic Rocafort-Pabón for their help and interest.
2. It is possible that "Quimbamba" refers to Quimbombo, the Congo (from Ganga) word for Gondei. Lydia Cabrera, *Vocabulario Congo (El Bantu que se habla en Cuba)* (Miami: Daytona Press, 1984), 134.
3. Luis Pales Matos, *Tuntun de Pasa y Griferia* (San Juan, Puerto Rico: Biblioteca de Autores, Puertorriqueños, 1950), 65-66. The poem, "Majestad Negra" (Black Majesty) is taught in grade schools throughout Puerto Rico and most school children know it by heart.
4. Joseph Holloway, ed., *Africanisms in American Culture* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1991), ix, defines Africanisms as, "[E]lements of culture found in the New World traceable to African origin." Quoted in Brian D. Joyner, *African Reflections on the American Landscape: Identifying and Interpreting Africanisms* (Washington, DC: National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, 2003), 2.
5. In prehistoric Puerto Rico, the use of stone as a construction material was limited to carved *menhirs* usually placed around ceremonial areas known as *bateyes* (*parques ceremoniales* or *canchas*). Archeological excavations also show that stone was used in the construction of some roads (*calzadas*).
6. Christopher Columbus's much-contested letter to the Spanish queen and king mentions that the "houses" were decorated with "nets" and surrounded with "fences," as apparently (only to him) was common in the Valencia region.

7. In Cuba, the *bohío* is described as a humble structure made of the different parts of the palm tree. Oswaldo Ramos, *Diccionario popular Cubano* (Madrid: Aguilar Editores S L, 1997), 27. Other construction materials are mentioned in the *Diccionario de la Lengua Española*, 22nd edition (Madrid: Real Academia Española, 2001). According to this second source, the word *bohío* is Taíno in origin and describes a rustic architectural artifact made of wood and branches or reeds that has just one opening. (In contrast, the *caney*, another Taíno word, describes similar structures [cobertizo] without walls.) Note that this is a description of the evolved *bohío*. The words *buhío* or *bugío* were also used in the past. Manuel Álvarez Nazario, *El habla campesina del país Orígenes y desarrollo del español en Puerto Rico* (Río Piedras, Puerto Rico: Editorial de la Universidad de Puerto Rico, 1990), 330. In this essay, the word *bohío* is used to both describe the original native and developed forms (which includes Africanisms). The English word “hut” is used interchangeably.

8. Many writers and essayists espouse the idea that the primeval hut is central to the development of architecture. See Vitruvius, *De re architectura libri decem*; Abbé Marc-Antoine Laugier, *Essai sur l'architecture*; Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*; Joseph Rykwert, *On Adam's House in Paradise*, among others. Philosophers and theorists follow suit, including Martin Heidegger and Christian Norberg-Schulz. It is my belief that the *bohío* is the Caribbean interpretation of the “primitive hut” or *choza primitiva*. My colleague, Dr. Rafael A. Crespo, refers to the Vitruvian paradigm as the *choza rústica*. (According to the *Diccionario de la Lengua Española*, *cabaña* is synonym for *choza*.)

9. Dora P. Crouch and June G. Johnson, *Traditions in Architecture Africa, America, Asia, and Oceania* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 25.

10. One might question whether or not the full-fledged collective Puerto Rican “personality” had congealed by the 18th century. In my opinion and from an architectural point of view, by this time (two centuries plus after initial European and African presence on the island) the personality was identifiable, as the evolution of special domestic types and the use of the word *ibaros* [*sic*] (*jibaro*) in this quote suggest.

11. Notes taken from an old manuscript on Caribbean islands kept at the General Library of the University of Havana, Cuba, in 1990. Even though I am unable to specifically name the source (it was presented to me as a bunch of pages with a sort of ribbon loosely binding them), I do remember that there were no page numbers or illustrations, as well as no formal title page. The historic character of the document, written in Spanish, however, was obvious. Since the library strives to preserve valuable documents, it is possible that the manuscript was acquired in this incomplete state. I translated the quoted text.

12. Also known on the island as *barracas*, *cuarteles*, *cuartelones*, and, at times, *ranchos*.

13. In the Spanish-speaking islands, these structures were known principally as *bohío* but also as *ranchito*, *casita*, *mediagua*, and *mediaguüta*. Manuel Álvarez Nazario, *El habla campesina del país Orígenes y desarrollo del español en Puerto Rico*, p 331. Cubans of Congo heritage also used the following terms: *nso*, *sualo*, *nusako*, and *kansesa*. (Curiously, tombs were known as *kabalonga* (*casa honda*) or “deep house.”) L. Cabrera, *Vocabulario Congo (El Bantu que se habla en Cuba)*, 46.

14. The post is called *pied-bois d'ail*. Jack Berthelot and Martine Gaumé, *Kaz Antiyé Jan Moun Rété* (Paris: Editions Caribéennes, 1982), 85. To “plant” means placing the vertical wooden post (*horcón*) that serves as a column and sustains the main roof beam (*cumbrera* or *cumblera*) and the overhangs (*aleros*). Arleen Pabón de Rocafort, *Dorado: Historia en Contrastes* (Dorado, Puerto Rico: Municipality of Dorado, 1988).

15. The island's construction workforce consisted primarily of slaves and prisoners. An estimated 17 percent of the slave trade was destined for the Spanish territories in America, while an additional 40 percent was directed to European-held islands in the Caribbean, which included Spanish colonies.

16. “Descripción de la Isla y Ciudad de Puerto Rico” sent to the King by Diego de Torres Vargas on April 23, 1647, quoted in Coll y Toste, *Boletín Histórico*, IV, 258. De Torres drew a comparison between the island and Angola. Palm leaves, reeds, *yaguas*, and *guano* are mentioned as local construction materials. (This poses an interesting dilemma for it is well

documented that palm trees are not native to the island.) Although some historians mention that mud was used as in Africa, the material as construction material is not associated with Puerto Rico.

17. David Buisseret, *Historic Architecture of the Caribbean* (London: Heinemann, 1980), 1. Buisseret's description matches those of Fray Inigo Abbad y Lasierra, *Historia Geográfica, Civil y Natural de la Isla de San Juan de Puerto Rico*; Pedro Tomás de Córdova, *Memorias Geográficas, Históricas, Económicas y Estadísticas de la Isla de Puerto Rico*; and Obispo Bartolomé de las Casas, *Brevísima relación de la destrucción de las Indias*, among others.

18. Buisseret, *Historic Architecture of the Caribbean*, is one of several that credits Europeans with this idea. A notable exception is presented by J. Berthelot and M. Gaumé, *Kaz Antiyé Jan Moun Rété* since they believe that this morphology is an architectural Africanism. This idea is reinforced by John Michael Vlach, *Back of the Big House: The Architecture of Plantation Slavery* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1993). According to Vlach, the shotgun arrangement is an Africanism. While I do not feel that the shotgun interior arrangement is solely an African contribution, the emphasis on rectangular spatial arrangements seems to be something characteristic to the African architectural experience, even if not unique to it.

19. Many Puerto Rican slaves came from these areas.

20. Notes taken from an old manuscript on Caribbean islands kept at the General Library of the University of Havana, Cuba, in 1990. It is interesting to note the specifics mentioned, such as the use of "Mayagüez bark" (Mayagüez is a town located on the west coast of the island). Humble interiors characterized most domestic establishments on the island. As late as 1899, for example, the "big house" was described in the following fashion—

Even the finest haciendas are meager and barren in their interior fittings. The floors are always bare. The walls have few pictures, though now and then one is surprised to see a clever painting by one of the masters of the modern French school. The usual wall decoration is a pair of Spanish bas-reliefs, in colored plaster or papier maché. Chromos and vilely executed woodcuts often make an appearance, and seem out of place with the oftentimes beautiful architectural finish of the drawing-rooms, whose windows, door less archways are framed in carved woods and relieved of severity by scroll latticework.

William Dinwiddie, *Puerto Rico; Its Conditions and Possibilities* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1899), 147.

21. Henry Louis Gates, Jr., Spencer Crew, and Cynthia Goodman, *Unchained Memories: Readings from the Slave Narratives* (Boston: Bulfinch Press, 2002), 67-68.

22. An *arrimao* (from the Spanish *arrimado*) was allowed to work a small plot that belonged to someone else. Payment was part of whatever was produced. Although not considered serfs, their life was extremely harsh as they were subjected to all sorts of uncertainties and economic hardships. It should be noted that in 1899 the institution was still prevalent and described in the following fashion—

House-rent is an almost unknown factor in the country, though in towns many people huddle in to one house and live, amid dirt and disease, at the expense to each family of a few pesos a month. It is customary for landed proprietors to grant to their peons small patches, on the steep hillsides, which are of little value for tillage. This meets the end of assuring their services to the plantation-owners upon demand, with no expense to himself, and secures him the éclat of being apparently a philanthropist.

See Dinwiddie, *Puerto Rico; Its Conditions and Possibilities*, 157.

23. Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space: The Classic Look at How We Experience Intimate Places* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1994).

24. The most relevant exponents of this theory are Berthelot and Gaumé, *Kaz Antiyé Jan Moun Rété*.

25. There exist all kinds of interpretations about the origins of this word. According to the *Diccionario de la Lengua Española*, in Andalucía and America, *soberado* describes an attic (*desván*). It is possible that some connection was made between an attic-like place and the floor of the house, particularly since many houses were placed on stilts. In 1765, houses on the island were described in the following manner—

Para aquellos días tienen unas casas que parecen palomares, fabricadas sobre pilares de madera con vigas y tablas: estas casas se reducen en un par de cuartos, están de día y noche abiertas, no habiendo en las mas, puertas ni ventanas con que cerrarlas: son tan poco sus muebles que en un instante se mudan: las casas que están en el campo son de la misma construcción, y en poco se aventajan unas a otras.

In these days they have houses that resemble pigeon coops built on top of wooden posts with wooden beams and slats: these houses are minimal and consist of a pair of rooms, they are open night and day, and they do not have doors or windows to close them: their furniture is so limited that they can move in an instant: the houses in the countryside have the same type of construction and they are not much better.” (Translation by author.)

Appendix II, 1765 “Memoria de Don Alejandro O’Reilly sobre la isla de Puerto Rico,” in L. Figueroa, *Breve Historia de Puerto Rico*, Vol. I (Río Piedras: Editorial Edil, Inc., 1979), 463-468. According to Manuel Álvarez Nazario, *El habla campesina del país Orígenes y desarrollo del español en Puerto Rico*, 333, the words originally described the interior generic space and with time came to be associated with the floor surface. There seems to be no definitive interpretation of whether or not the word was used to describe all floors, including dirt-packed floors.

In 1863, a house appearing behind a lady on horseback in the painting *Hacienda de Puerto Nuevo* by Puerto Rican painter José Campeche, was described as having stilts: *Un bohío o casa de campo sobre pilares altos de capá o ausubo. José Campeche 1751-1809* (San Juan: Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña, 1971), 24-26. It is interesting to note that the word *bohío* also was used to describe houses in the countryside belonging to the upper social strata. Curiously, similar structures can be found in the northern part of Spain (Galicia). Called *hórreos*, they are usually used as storage or drying areas.

26. Some years ago, when visiting one of these abodes, I observed that the lady of the house retained her untidy *soberao*, formed of rough wooden planks. At first, I was surprised with her situation. Now, I understand that the *soberao* proves that you have a place of your own (even if you are an *arrimao* and the land belongs to another person). My friend Gloria M. Ortiz, former historical architect for the Puerto Rico State Historic Preservation Office, had a similar experience: when visiting the house of a *santero* artisan.

27. John Michael Vlach, *Back of the Big House: The Architecture of Plantation Slavery*, 165. Susan Snow’s quote comes from: Norman R. Yetman, ed., *Life Under the “Peculiar Institution”: Selections from the Slave Narrative Collection* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1970), 61, 144. A former slave described living conditions in the following manner: “Parsons Rogers come to Texas in ’63 and bring ’bout 42 slaves and my first work was to tote water in the field. Parsons lived in a good, big frame house, and the niggers lived in log houses what had dirt floors and chimneys, and our bunks has rope slats and grass mattress.” Gates Jr., Crew, and Goodman, *Unchained Memories: Readings from the Slave Narratives*, 81. No mention is made in this case whether or not the dirt-packed floor was a personal choice of the cabin’s inhabitant.

28. One of the theses of this paper is that the *bohío* had a profound influence on Puerto Rican domestic architecture. During the 1940s they still represented a formidable presence—

In sharp contrast to the massive, solid structures of the cities are the bohíos, or cabins of the country people, constructed in much the same manner as the aboriginal homes of the Indians which the Spaniards found on their arrival. The real bohío, raised a few feet above the ground on stilts, is made from palm thatch, with one or at the most two rooms, and sometimes a lean-to kitchen, where cooking is done over a charcoal fire. Furniture is scant and simple, consisting mostly of hammocks, pallets, or perhaps cot beds with colchonetas (quilts) thrown over the springs. Usually the interior walls are brightened by gay pictures from illustrated magazines and newspapers. The crude construction of these humble homes is offset by a profusion of flowers and

blossoming vines. Puerto Rico Reconstruction Administration, *Puerto Rico: A Guide to the Island of Boriquen*, 118.

29. Culo Prieto was roughly located to the east of the San Juan urban core, sandwiched between the city and the only land gate. It was roughly located between Sol, Luna, and San Francisco Streets east of de Tanca Street and west of the San Cristóbal fortification.

30. The plan used for this analysis is an 1880 copy of a 1771 document. The copy was prepared by Francisco J. de Zaragosa and dated December 9, 1880. The American administration copied the copy (provided to them by Mr. Morales on tracing paper) dating it to October 16, 1908. The original third copy is housed at the National Archives and Records Administration, Records of the Bureau of Yards and Docks, Record Group 71, "Plano de la Plaza de San Juan de Puerto Rico y sus ymmediaciones [*sic*]..."

31. In San Juan, street facades typically opened directly onto the street (now sidewalks). During the 20th century, the streets of the area under scrutiny were formally laid. Since some facades did not directly align, small gardens were inserted between the facades and the street proper. This is how evidence of the former deconstruction of the orthogonal grid is preserved.

32. The concept of the "Other" is amply analyzed in Simone de Beauvoir's *The Other Sex*, Edward Said's *Orientalism*, and Matthew Frye Jacobson's *Whiteness of a Different Color* and *Barbarian Virtues*.

33. Several countries recognize this issue and designate as places worthy of preservation locales that lack definitive presence of artifacts constructed by humans. Unesco recently adopted the International Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. In the United States, recent preservation efforts along these lines include the Trail of Tears, a significant symbolic landscape.

34. At the time that I presented this paper in its original form, I was acting as a preservation consultant for a project that was to be located on the ruins of an early 19th-century cotton *beneficiado* at Hacienda La Esmeralda in Santa Isabel, Puerto Rico. I collaborated with the architect, Abel Misla, in the creation of a new building that frames the ruins in a compatible and sensitive manner. The archeological ruins of the big house were found next to the *beneficiado* ruins, perhaps reinforcing the idea that the *beneficiado* might have housed slaves. The rehabilitation project won the premio a la Excelencia de Diseño prize from the Colegio de Arquitectos y Paisajistas de Puerto Rico [Puerto Rican Architects Association].